

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

ART. XVI. *An Inquiry concerning the Diseases and Functions of the Brain, the Spinal Cord, and the Nerves.* By AMARIAH BRIGHAM, M. D. 12mo., pp. 327. New York, 1840.

THE object and plan of the present work are, to adopt the language of the author, "to call the attention of those practitioners of medicine into whose hands it falls, to the importance of the nervous system, and to persuade them to embrace every opportunity that is presented for studying its functions and diseases.

"For this purpose," the author remarks, "I have endeavoured to give a partial summary of what is now known respecting this system. I have collected a large number of cases explanatory of its diseases and functions—cases that are scattered through many volumes; to which I have added a considerable number that have fallen under my own observation; and have thus sought to indicate the way that this system should be studied in order to increase our knowledge of its functions and our means of remedying its diseases.

"In the second part, I have briefly treated of a number of diseases, the pathology of which is not yet settled. I have not sought to give full accounts of these, but to direct attention to a few important circumstances, and such as require further investigation."

The general plan of the work is a good one, and it has been very successfully carried out. It presents a tolerably accurate though somewhat hasty sketch of the present state of physiological knowledge in relation to the brain and nervous system, illustrated by a number of judiciously selected cases of disease affecting various portions of the brain, spinal cord, and nerves, and which are, at the same time, well adapted to elucidate the leading outlines of the pathology of the nervous system. This division of Dr. B.'s inquiry might, it is true, have been digested with a little more care, and those particulars connected with the physiology of the nervous system that are to be considered as fully established more clearly distinguished from such as are as yet merely conjectural, or which require for their elucidation further observations. One or two errors, which it is unnecessary here to particularise, have been admitted, and we notice a few omissions, more especially in reference to the structure of the nervous fasciculi—the nature of their primitive fibres, and the positive absence of any anastomosis or connection between them—the structure of the sympathetic nerve, &c., a knowledge of the facts in relation to which are essential to a correct understanding of the pathology of a large and important class of diseases.

A reference to the admirable summary given by Professor Müller of the physiology of the nervous system, would have furnished Dr. Brigham with many useful hints, as well in relation to the materials as to the arrangement of his Inquiry.

The second part of the Inquiry contains a very brief but at the same time interesting account of the principal diseases that have their seat in the brain and other parts of the nervous system. The only fault of this division of the work is its extreme conciseness.

We can with great confidence recommend the work of Dr. Brigham to the favourable notice of the profession. The practitioner, in common with the student, will find it a convenient and very useful manual of the physiology and pathology of the nervous system.

If it should be the means of inducing "but a few to investigate the affections of this system with care—to record and make known the facts they observe, and thus add something to our knowledge of its functions and diseases," as the author hopes it may, it will prove a much more useful work than are many of those already published on the same subject, although of far higher pretensions.

D. F. C.

ART. XVII. *New Remedies: the Method of Preparing and Administering them; their Effects on the Healthy and Diseased Economy, &c.* By ROBLEY DUNGLISON, M. D., M. A. P. S., Prof. of Inst. Med. and Mat. Med. in Jeff. Med. Coll. of Philada., &c., &c., &c. Philadelphia, 1839. Lea & Blanchard. 8vo. pp. 503.

THERE is manifestly no acquisition more essential to the practitioner, than a thorough acquaintance with the properties of the various remedial agents which he employs—their effects on the animal economy in health and disease, and the best method of administering them, so as to secure the effects we desire. Every attempt to assist the physician in the attainment of such knowledge is entitled to favour, and such, we are persuaded, will be the reception of the volume just prepared by Dr. Dunglison. The aim of the author is "to enable the profession to form an accurate estimate of the value of remedies of more recent introduction, or of the older remedies whose use has been revived under novel applications." These remedies are arranged alphabetically—their synonyms are first given—next the best methods of preparing them—then their effects on the economy in health and disease, according to the experiments and observations of various practitioners and experimenters—and, finally, formulæ for the most approved methods of administering them.

The following article, extracted at random, furnishes a fair example of the plan of the work, and the manner in which it is executed:

"FULIGO.

"SYNONYMES.—Fuligo Splendens, F. Ligni, Soot, Woodsoot.

"French.—Suie.

"German.—Glanzruß, Spieglerruß, Kaminruß, Ofenruß, Russ.

"The discovery of creosote, and its extensive application to the treatment of disease, gave occasion to the resuscitation of this article—much employed by the ancients, but subsequently fallen into oblivion.

"The older physicians frequently used soot as an exciting, diaphoretic agent in cachexia of every kind, in chronic rheumatism, cutaneous affections, and especially in the evil results of their sudden repercussion; in glandular indurations, rickets, exostoses, &c. It has also been employed as a domestic remedy in colic, and in the simple and dysenteric diarrhœa, and cholera of children. Several modern recommendations—as by Schütte and Weisenberg—remained unheeded until the attention of physicians was recently drawn to it, especially by Blaud.* He is of opinion, that the costly—and by no means easily prepared—creosote may be wholly replaced by soot. Both are products of the dry distillation of organic substances; their odours are analogous, and as soot is much cheaper and more easily obtained, it deserves, he thinks, to be tried more extensively in therapeutics. The soot has a nauseously empyreumatic, more or less bitter and acrid, saline taste.

"EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY.—Blaud† has exhibited the soot in different diseases, especially in the form of ointment, or in decoction, with excellent and

* Revue Médicale, Juin, 1834, et Janvier, 1835, and Dr. E. Gräfe, in Gräfe und Walther's Journal, xxiii. 310. Berlin, 1835.

† Journal des Connaissances Médico-Chirurg., Mai, 1834.